

POEMS OF ARMAGEDDON



By
A. M. W. and E. P. F.

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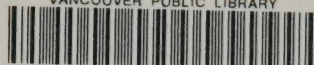
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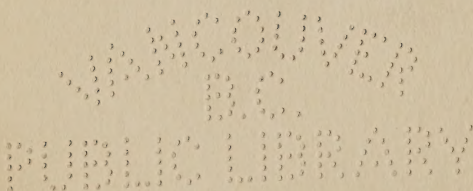


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By
A. M. W. and E. P. F.



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Mrs A. M. Winlow and
Dr. E. P. Leoster -


WELL DONE, BELGIUM

50.2
O, PEOPLE of the Belgian land,
E'en as ye met great Caesar's hosts
So now ye meet the Hun.
Fronting his horrid swarms ye stand
Undaunted, and the world watching thee
Is dumb from all her coasts,
Knowing thy deeds beyond word praise,
Thy great example all earth's heritage.
Now shall the future days
One sentence shout unceasingly:
"O, ye brave folk, well done!"

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I

BEFORE BATTLE

THE Battle opens and the dreadful guns
Thunder their hymn of praises unto Death.
O, Lord, who fill'st our bodies with sweet breath,
Uphold us now War's shuddering whisper runs!

We who have faced the conflict in past years
Again forsake the plowshare for the sword;
The bended bow has sent the gath'ring word—
Bless now our courage and forgive our fears.

One moment may we watch the low'ring night
And turn still faces to the coming foe;
Thus without faltering shall our legions go
And earth storm fighting through the waning light.

Now sets dread Armageddon that Thy Word
Warned us of old. Pour out Thy vials of wrath
And we will tread once more the awful path—
Then give us peace forever, O, just Lord!

E. P. F.

II

GREATER BRITAIN

PROUDLY she looms above the storm,
Throned on the three grey seas,
And flings to the unseen rims of earth
Her clear-called challenges.

Will ye fight, my sons, for your old loved home,
For freedom, honor and ancient throne—
Or go I down to the war alone?

And the storm of her wrath black gathering
Spread whimpering around her knees,
And the sound of her vanguards marching
Came in on the three grey seas.

She listens. There comes far thunder,
The answering cry of men,
The rushing trample of many feet
And the words come back again:

Thy war is our war wherever it be,
Thy foes are our foes on land or sea,
And where thou smitest we smite with thee!

And the storm of their wrath swift gathering
Spread thundering about her knees,
And the noise of coming armies
Swept in from the distant seas.

Proudly her ancient throne she leaves,
Girt safe by the three grey seas,
And leads to war her far-fetched spears,
Her children's legionaries.

They have come to fight for the old loved home,
For freedom, honor and ancient throne—
She goes no more to a war alone.

And the storm of their black wrath gathers,
It thunders around the world,
And terror and death and wild dismay
In the ranks of their foe is hurled.
For they fight for truth and the rights of men
And blood-won liberties,
For their old, old home, and their ancient throne,
Rock-set in the three grey seas!

E. P. F.

III

O CANADA, BELOVÈD LAND!

O CANADA, belovèd land!
A spirit hovers over thee—
On her brow the dawn for band,
In her eyes the deeps of sea.
Her garments from thy golden grain
Borrow for futurity
A fadeless sheen. No cloud shall stain
Thy liberty.

O Canada, thy soul shall rise
Enshackled only by the stars
To loftier heights. O, turn thine eyes
To her that from the throes of War's
Dread tumult hovers over thee:
In her eyes doth burn the flame
Of love—Britannia is her name,
Or Liberty.

O Canada, the breath of war
But fans the torch in thy right hand;
Its flame leaps up and lights afar
Thy peopled plain and fruitful land;
It shows thy glorious destiny
Upon the brow of her whose claim
Is love—Britannia is her name,
Or Liberty!

A. M. W.

IV

LET US REJOICE

NOW flares the writhing battle on the distant
plain—

The coughing guns are speaking and the maddened
echoes groan—

Let us not forget in our sorrow and our pain
That we rejoice together though we weep alone!

Though to our anxious ears the fated message come
And death-dropt silence mantles cot, or mart, or
throne,

Yet if red victory fling our banners to the sun
We will rejoice together though we weep alone!

With love that quails not at the silence of the years,
With love not measured by the broken, stifled moan,
Though in blood-bought quiet we shed our bitter
tears,

We will rejoice together though we weep alone!

Fear not, brave dead, who sleep beneath the smok-
ing sky—

The world shall see us smiling, nor catch a coward
tone.

Be stern, O, trembling lip; shout, tongue, thy
proudest cry,

We will rejoice together though we weep alone!

E. P. F.

MY RIFLE

PROUD and cold are thy lips,
 O, my Belovèd,
 And they who receive thy kiss go down in death.
 I clasp thee about thy moulded hips,

 O, my Belovèd,
 And love thee much but shun thy terrible breath.

And sullen is thy heart,
 O, my Belovèd,
 Yet they who trust thee well know no defeat.
 Harsh and chilling thou wilt do thy part,

 O, my Belovèd—
 Thy front is death and deadly thy retreat.

Straight and slim thy waist,
 O, my Belovèd,
 And fair thy body is, thy spirit brave;
 Yet they who have thy love embraced,

 O, my Belovèd,
 Pass silent to the all-devouring grave.

Cruel thy passion lights,
 O, my Belovèd.
 When its hot tide doth well within thy breast
 Its fierce fire the trembling victim blights,

 O, my Belovèd,
 The grave's full mouth thy wooings manifest.

Thy soul doth thirst for blood,
 O, my Belovèd,
 Life where thou reignest swift withereth away;
 Yet thy shade is safety, O, thou Bride of Death,

 And my Belovèd,
 And only where ye pass may peace hold sway.

E. P. F.

VI

POLAND

O THOU belovèd land whose lute has caught
Immortal music from the crystal spheres!
Thy freedom now absolves the tyrant years
Wherein thy prisoned spirit weeping fought
For liberty; thy mighty soul distraught
Has voiced her woe in music to our ears,
That cry has melted to a stream of tears
And mingling with thy blood, thy freedom bought.
Thine enemy unwittingly flung wide
Time's noiseless gate, and like a rising tide
The golden years come flooding through to bless
And conjure joy for thy heart's heaviness.
But through the golden mist an outcast prone
Beneath the grinning framework of a throne!

A. M. W.

VII

One of the incidents of Friday, when the fierce fighting was awful in its sacrifices, was widely recounted. A British infantry regiment, upon receiving an order to advance and take a German position, knelt for a moment in prayer. Then the men, knowing that their charge was to be terrible in cost, sprang to their feet, and with fixed bayonets clambered out of the shelter of the trench. In short and rapid rushes, they advanced in wide open order, alternately lying down and then making another dash of fifteen yards. From the German position came the thick hail of the machine guns. The attacking soldiers sang and hurraed as they swept onward. Many fell with cries of encouragement on their lips. Those who remained of the regiment took the German position, after a desperate hand-to-hand encounter.—Extract from "Daily Province," Vancouver, B. C.

THE BRITISH CHARGE

"**W**E pray, we pray, O grant us Lord,
Grant a glorious victory,
The sword unsheathed for Liberty
Lord bless now with Thy quick'ning word."

The breath that challenges is hot,
The hail of guns like leaden rain
Strews the field with soldiers slain,
But ravished lands are not forgot;
The tumult of their answer rends
The heaven and with the thunder blends.

"Comrades, onward sweep the foe
Before the hurricane of right!
What matter if the darkening night
Engulf us? Fearless let us go,
Triumphant let our answer peal—
To no tyrant free men kneel!"

Their answer rings and like a flame
That seeking quenchless fire leaps
Into the lightning flash—it sweeps
Their arms to victory and fame!

A. M. W.

VIII

WAR

Europe:

“WHAT are those vast, grim shadows
tumbling about the dawn?
What are those red hands doing which fall as
though to slay?
There on the rims of morning phantoms of hell
they twist—
What that dreadful whisper that rises and dies
away?”

Death:

“They are my mightiest chieftains called from the
lower hells,
Bred in the halls of madness where the blood-lust
ruler dwells;
Their hands are armed with slaughter and their
feet are wet with tears,
And pain blows from their nostrils and terrible
fog of fears.”

Europe:

“What is that strange stubble strowed about my
harvest fields?
And what that sickening savor which comes adown
the wind?
What are those writhing smokeshafts that stab
the growing day?
From what red altars rise they? In whose dread
temple shrined?”

Death:

“That whisper? The wail of children tangled and
torn by shot.
That whisper? Cry of a people seethed in the
battle pot.
The stubble be mangled bodies, morsels and shards
of flesh—
That smell? The gouting blood poured from the
cut veins’ tangled mesh.
That smoke? From burning homes goes up and
shroudeneth the skies—
Murder and Hate the altar priests where flames
that sacrifice.”

Europe:

"What are those lean dogs hunting, cloudy for
multitude,
Great packs that sweep along with rise and fall
of the lea,
Billowing into the startled dawn, flooding across
the plain,
Till hill and vale are grey with steel, touched dark
as a wind-swept sea?"

Death:

"They are the hungry dogs of war hunting the flesh
of earth—
They are the makers of the slain." (Death
laughed in awful mirth.)
"They are the fruit of hate's swart lusts, the spawn
of blood and steel;
They are the violent hounds of strife that slaver
about my heel."

Europe:

"What wine brims in that goblet red mantling on
the sky—
Thunder of white strained faces on which the gun-
fires loom—
That sound like millioned waters beating about
my path?"

Death:

"Those maddened eyes? Earth's multitudes battling
in the gloom.
And that fierce beaker's drink which foams its
sullen lights on high?
Wine of the blood of nations, trod out in the press
of Wrath."

Europe:

"Who is that hard-faced horseman who leads the
demon band?"
Death turned and answered grimly: "Today he
is my right hand."

E. P. F.

IX

CANADA

WHENCE is that noise, O, Canada,
(Not wind on thy ripened grain)
Like the steady tramp of a growing host
That rises from hill and plain?

There has come a call from across the sea,
There has come a voice from the East,
My sons have heard in the sunlit lands
And they gather as to a feast.
For our stern fair mother has called to us,
Who bideth the ancient home,
That the uncouth hordes have rushed to war,
That the Goth hath dared our throne.

Whence those lines of brown-clad men
That trickle across thy land,
With steadfast face set towards the East,
A rifle in each right hand?

There has come a voice from across the sea,
There has come a call from the East,
From the hills and plains we answer it—
Our greatest and our least.
For we felt a stir in our British blood
That flushed like pride to our face,
And we remembered by axe and plow
That we come of a fighting race!

E. P. F.

X

LIEGE

LOVER of Liberty gaze on these walls,
The shot and shell of tyranny are there,
Before the stains and scars the eyelid falls,
But deeper gaze into the wounds laid bare.

Through each quivering wound a spirit sighs,
It is the soul of one who perished there
That you might see the glorious sun arise
In stainless skies at dawn and call it fair.

A. M. W.

XI

KITCHENER

SILENT, sufficient, inflexible of will—
The menace of the future in his eyes—
Watching beyond the reach of our brief gaze
The shadows gathering in to-morrow's skies.
Stern, unsparing, keen, his iron hands
Moulding a nation's destiny—today
Wielding a trowel, to-morrow grasps a sword,
Building to heaven or smiting to decay.

Before him inchoate the future looms
Vast, threat'ning, yet he lays his hand on fate
And forces her to bend to his strong word,
Compels the unknown to precipitate,
To crystallize, to form his great ideals.
Before him human flesh dissolves. He sees
Nothing between his soul and its high aim
That shall not flee or bow to his decrees.

Lo, he has dreams—how great they are none know.
Shrouded, inscrutable moveth that strong brain,
Missing no jot, leaving no tittle bare,
Spanning a desert, measuring a grain.
Almost a god built out of human steel,
Tempered in fire lit by some occult hand—
He stands between the nations and their fear,
And lo, his shade is safety for the land.

E. P. F.

XII

(Bought with the proceeds of readings of "Les Chatiments" during the siege of Paris, 1870.)

"Thou deadly crater moulded by my muse
Cast thou thy bronze into my bowed and wounded heart
And let my soul its vengeance to thy bronze impart!"

TO THE CANNON "VICTOR HUGO"

THOU mighty crater, let thy silent bronze
Awake to life! Again thy Paris stands
With gleaming spires a lure to hostile bands,
Again the flaming garb of war she dons,
O, be thou then the living voice that cons
The lesson of the Past, the voice that brands
As tyrant, traitor with blood-fouled hands,
Who plays at war with human souls for pawns.
The unconquerable spirit breathes through thee
In wrathful torrents, and the sheltering rock
Must hide us while the blinding majesty
Of Freedom issues from the battle-shock.
Thy brazen throat shall hurl defiance wild,
Then sing with lyric sweetness to thy child.

A. M. W.

XIII

(When leaving for the front the Vancouver regiments marched to the playing of "I'm on My Way to Valcartier," to the tune of "I'm on My Way to Mandalay." The sun shone gloriously and the mountains were never more beautiful.)

THE VANCOUVER VOLUNTEER

I'VE listened to thy mountain airs,
I've listened to thine Island story,
I've seen the love-light in thine eyes
As thou hast sung thy country's glory.
I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

My heart responded to thy songs
I've thrilled at warlike tales and tender,
O, listen now when I take up
The story of my country's splendor!
I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

O, mountain land where Freedom spreads
Such glorious wings that not a stain
Can rest upon thy snow-crowned hills
Or darken blossoming field or plain!
I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

O, Sleeping Beauty, on thy crest
I've seen the light of sunset shine
As though some Hebe dazed with awe
Had tripped and spilled the crimson wine!
I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

THE VANCOUVER VOLUNTEER—(Continued)

O, Lions, that in mighty strength
Do guard the gates of our fair land,
I've seen thee in the silver light,
The heraldry of twilight, stand!

I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

O, Capilano, crystal stream,
The dew from heaven for our need,
The blue-bird following thy flood,
In uncaged flight is of our breed.

I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

O, mountains that the noon-tide sun
Doth burn against the azure dome,
Thy beauty shall my spirit see,
My soul be with my mountain home!

I'm on my way to Valcartier,
I've come to say Good-by.

A. M. W.

XIV

TOMMY ATKINS

YOU may smile at Tommy Atkins
When 'e crosses of your beat,
And you think to see 'im walking
That 'e owns the bally street—
But when 'is country's danger
Calls for men to fight 'er foe
You may turn and sleep till daylight—
'E's the man that's got to go!

You can find 'is bones arotting
From the East unto the West—
With 'is blooming 'arness on 'im
'E's ataking of 'is rest.
From China to Sevastapol
'E's proved 'is blooming worth—
If life and blood meant ownership,
Good Gawd, 'e owns the earth!

'E's half a child and half a gawd,
'Is 'ome is in the tent;
When the bullets are asinging
'E smiles and is content;
When the foe is swarming round 'im
'E'll stay joking nothing loth;
'E'd sleep 'twixt death and devil
And take chances with them both.

TOMMY ATKINS—(Continued)

And if a comrade's wounded
When the foe is charging up,
And the bugle sounds retiring
And it's certain death to stop,
Then 'e'll take the poor chap with 'im
From that field of flaming 'ell,
Or 'e'll die a-fighting for 'im,
And you'll find them where 'e fell.

'E'll march up cool and steady
With the bullets flying fast,
And 'e'll serve 'is guns and fight them
Like a soldier to the last.
And if the foe is stronger
And outnumber ten to one
Then 'e'll die where 'e stood fighting,
Stretched beside 'is empty gun.

And methinks when 'eaven's archangel
Picks the final army corps,
And they take the very bravest
And the best to form the fore,
Then 'e'll call for Thomas Atkins,
And 'e'll place 'im in the van—
For 'e's every inch a soldier,
And 'e's every inch a man!

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E. P. F.

XV

TO THE BRITISH SLAIN

WE mourn thy loss, O sons of Albion,
The ensanguined shreds of war borne on
the wind
Have stained our cheeks with tears, and eyes are
blind
With grief; we see thy manhood's gracious dawn
Snatched back into the night, thy mighty brawn
Become the prey of Death, whose red dews bind
Thy fearless eyes. Within our hearts enshrined
Thy names shall live till stars are all withdrawn.
Ye hurled into the battle at the cries
Of sister nation bleeding neath her wrongs;
Mocking laughter rang through alien skies—
For answer came the thunder peal of Mons.
O, ye heroes, Europe sown with thee
Shall flame to heaven her harvest—Liberty!

A. M. W.

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